THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

As part of its legal mandate to protect and promote human rights, the Danish Institute for Human Rights – Denmark’s National Human Rights Institution is mandated to engage directly with private actors. The purpose of this engagement is to address the positive and negative human rights impacts of businesses operating around the world.

While states have the primary duty to protect and fulfil human rights, businesses have, at a minimum, the responsibility to respect human rights. Beyond this obligation, the Institute recognises that businesses have significant potential to contribute to the increased enjoyment of human rights by supporting long-term sustainable development in the societies where they operate.

All engagements between the Institute and corporate actors are conducted with the following mutual understanding between the Institute and the corporate actor:

1. The Institute is a National Human Rights Institution mandated by law to protect and promote human rights.

2. Corporate actors engage with the Institute in good faith with the aim of improving their impacts on human rights.

3. The Institute reserves the right not to engage with corporate actors where there is an international consensus on the irreconcilability of their business with human rights.¹

4. The Institute strives to carry out its corporate engagement projects using a human rights based approach.

5. The Institute is an impartial, independent human rights institution, and does not offer public endorsements of specific corporate actors. Public communications by a corporate actor regarding its work with the Institute must be agreed to prior to disclosure. The communications must be factually correct and must not indicate endorsement by the Institute.

6. The Institute will in all cases disclose the identities of the corporate actors with which it engages. The Institute actively encourages disclosure by corporate actors of the outcomes of their work with the Institute and, together with corporate actor, is committed to strive towards full disclosure of both the existence and contents of Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) reports that the Institute is involved in.

7. The Institute strives to publicly disseminate knowledge based on experiences gained in corporate engagement projects in order to advance human rights in the wider corporate sector.

8. The Institute continuously evaluates the results of its work with corporate actors, and may discontinue concrete corporate engagements if the results achieved over time are not satisfactory.

9. These principles are annexed to all of the Institute’s corporate engagement contracts. The Institute continuously monitors engagements to ensure compliance with these principles. Non-compliance with these principles will be considered a material breach of contract.

¹ As a point of departure the Institute will consider similar criteria for exclusion as the United Nations Global Compact: https://www.unglobalcompact.org/participation/join/who-should-join